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11 JUN 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT : CIA Records Management Board

1. Attached is the Records Management Board (RMB) report to the Executive Director for the period 1 January through 31 May 1970. As you know we have been submitting "quarterly-reports" to the Executive Director on Records Management Board activities in order to accommodate his wishes to be kept advised on progress in managing the agency-wide records purge and to afford us an opportunity to communicate major records management problems and progress to him.

2. You will note that we have expressed a desire in paragraph seven of the attached report to discontinue quarterly reporting and report to the Executive Director only when we feel we have something of particular interest to him or something which warrants his attention. In requesting discontinuance of the quarterly report, I do not think we should abandon this channel for keeping Col. White informed of our records management program and the problems confronting us in this area. The senior records officers who comprise the membership of the Records Management Board need some assurance that their problems are at least being heard, even if we are unable to obtain the desired response in the form of more personnel and resources to tackle the records problems. On the other hand a quarterly restatement of the same burdensome problems with little progress towards their solution is unlikely to be well received by the Executive Director.

3. The Records Management Board has done an effective job in managing the records purge these past two years. It is a useful mechanism for the senior records management officers to meet and discuss the Agency's records program knowing that they have a channel to bring their problems to the attention of the Agency's top leadership. However I have serious misgivings concerning the Board's ability to handle the more basic issues confronting us, such as: developing proposals, programs, and policy for uniformity and compatibility of future Agency microform systems; making significant contributions to our desire to revert to a more centralized "Agency-oriented" records management program; or planning for the Agency's future Archival programs. Present

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members of the Records Management Board lack the time, authority, managerial experience, and stature within their own Directorates, to address themselves to these broad policy problems. Also, the Board members are severely hampered even in dealing with the technical and procedural aspects of our Records Program (example, establishing a policy on "office-of-record" for inter Directorate correspondence) because the Directorates, with the possible exception of the DD/P, do not have staff support to do research and prepare issue papers for consideration by the Board. In most instances, staff work has been done by the SSS/RAB, but given the small size of this unit and its current work load the time they can devote to staff papers and research for the Records Management Board is totally inadequate.

25X1A 4. I have considered recommending to you that we upgrade the membership of the Records Management Board to a level equivalent to the Directorate representatives on the Information Processing Board (IPB), but even if this proposal were accepted, I doubt that we would gain a significant improvement in the Board's ability to solve our Records Management problems. In a memorandum for the record on IPB activities dated 25 May, the Chairman IPB had some observations that are equally applicable to a Records Management Board. [REDACTED] pointed out that a Board is not a good vehicle to be used in staffing out a project or proposal from square one. A board can only be effective if it keeps its agenda narrowed to actionable items already well staffed out in advance. Determining the Agency's future in microminiaturization and centralized automated records systems demands special in depth studies and the same "special operational analysis" needed in information processing applications if we are to make sure that our choice in these areas is the wisest one. A Records Management Board has a role to play in recommending what choice should be made, but it is a more complex task than can be done by part-time officials with no staff support.

5. My memorandum to you of 26 May 1970 presented an approach for new concepts in the Management of Records and Information Processing Activities and identified the required resources in general terms. Until we are prepared to deal with the recommendations contained therein, there is nothing to be gained by restructuring the Records Management Board. I think the Board should continue to meet in an effort to chip away at some of the smaller more manageable problem areas, but you should recognize its limitations and realize that it is clearly not capable of making significant progress in resolving our major records problem areas.

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[REDACTED]  
Chief, Support Services Staff

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